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Daily Highlights

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T U E S D A Y H I G H L I G H T S

* Security Council commemorates fiftieth anniversary of end of Second World War in Asia-Pacific region; observes minute of silence in memory of War's victims.

* United Nations says 130,000 Krajina Serbs have now fled to Federal Republic of Yugoslavia; Croat exodus from Serb-controlled Bosnia continues.

* Chairman of United Nations Special Commission to visit Baghdad for four days at invitation of Iraqi Government.

* Security Council expresses concern at slow progress in Western Sahara identification process; calls on parties to cooperate fully with MINURSO.

* Security Council condemns kidnapping of civilians in Kashmir and related death of Norwegian national; demands immediate release of all detainees.

* Team from DHA and UNDP to prepare detailed plan for improving prison conditions in Rwanda.

* Member States owe United Nations $2.61 billion as of 31 July; $866 million owed to regular budget and $1.74 billion owed to peace-keeping.

* Ad Hoc Committee on Establishment of International Criminal Court to finalize report to General Assembly on draft statute.

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The Security Council today commemorated the fiftieth anniversary of the end of the Second World War in the Asia-Pacific region with a statement by its President, Nugroho Wisnumurti (Indonesia). The Council also observed a minute of silence in memory of the War's victims.

The Council President said the Second World War had shattered the lives of tens of millions of people in the Asia-Pacific region. In order to prevent the recurrence of such a tragedy, the United Nations had been established, with

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primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security conferred by the Charter on the Security Council.

"Unity and harmony among nations would be the most honourable and noble way to pay tribute to those who sacrificed their lives for peace during the Second World War", the statement continued. "For this reason, it is appropriate for the Security Council to pay homage on this anniversary to all the victims of the Second World War in the Asia-Pacific region."

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Some 130,000 Croatian Serbs have entered the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro) since the exodus from the Krajina region began last week, according to a United Nations spokesman. Meanwhile, Croats have continued to leave Serb-controlled territory around Banja Luka in Bosnia and Herzegovina. There are estimated to be 15,000 Croats in the area, as well as 30,000 to 35,000 Muslims.

The overall situation in the former Yugoslavia was quiet today, the spokesman said. The Bosnian Government continued its offensive in the area of Donji Vakuf, but there was a significant reduction in activity there, while Serb shelling of the Croatian port of Dubrovnik abated. However, there was some small-arms, mortar and artillery fire in the southern part of Sector East in Croatia last night. Four United Nations observation posts manned by Russian troops were hit by fire from the Croatian side and one was abandoned.

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The Chairman of the Special Commission on the disarmament of Iraq, Rolf Ekeus, will leave New York tonight for a four-day visit to Baghdad, according to a United Nations spokesman. He is going at the invitation of Iraq to receive additional information regarding its weapons programmes. Mr. Ekeus will travel on to Amman, Jordan, for further meetings. Iraq yesterday informed him that the "deadline" of the end of August for United Nations action to lift the oil embargo against it was no longer in force.

Iraq recently declared that it had developed biological weapons before 1991, but claimed that it had destroyed all of them. Mr. Ekeus welcomed that declaration, but said there were certain shortcomings and contradictions in it.

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The Security Council has expressed deep concern about the slow progress in the identification process in Western Sahara. In a statement to correspondents at Headquarters yesterday, President Wisnumurti called on both parties to

cooperate fully with the United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara (MINURSO) in ensuring progress in the identification and registration process.

The Council also expressed its full confidence in, and support for, the Acting Special Representative, Erik Jensen, for his efforts in cooperation with both parties.

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In another statement to correspondents yesterday, the President of the Council strongly condemned the kidnapping of civilians in Kashmir, as a result of which one Norwegian national had been killed. He expressed deep concern over the reappearance of kidnapping, an act of international terrorism condemned by the international community, and demanded the immediate release of all detainees.

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The Department of Humanitarian Affairs yesterday convened a meeting in Geneva aimed at improving conditions in Rwanda's prisons. The meeting was attended by representatives of seventeen governments, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), United Nations agencies and non-governmental organizations.

Several governments expressed support in principle for the United Nations initiative to relieve prison overcrowding and expedite the judicial process in Rwanda. However, they wanted more details, including on costing. A group of officials from the Department of Humanitarian Affairs and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) will leave for Rwanda on Thursday to prepare a comprehensive plan. The group will work with the Secretary-General's Special Representative, the United Assistance Mission in Rwanda (UNAMIR), and the Rwandan Government.

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As of 31 July, Member States owed the United Nations a total of $2.61 billion, according to the latest update on the Organization's financial situation. Of that amount $866 million was owed to the regular budget and $1.74 billion was for peace-keeping.

The United States -- the largest debtor -- owed $527 million to the regular budget and $649 million to peace-keeping. The Russian Federation owed $21 million to the regular budget and $500 million to peace-keeping.

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The Ad Hoc Committee on the Establishment of an International Criminal Court has reconvened its first session to finalize a report to the General Assembly on its review of the draft statute for such a court. The draft was adopted by the International Law Commission at its forty-sixth session in July 1994. The report, which is expected to be approved at the conclusion of the current two-week segment on 25 August, will include a summary of the Committee's discussions on the substantive and administrative issues arising out of the draft statute.

The Committee agreed to begin its work with a general discussion of the principle of complementarity, including the issue of the statute's relationship to national jurisdiction. According to the draft, the court would provide a complementary international criminal justice system to enhance the effective prosecution and suppression of crimes of international concern by national criminal justice systems.

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